

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 1278

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JO, IS, XF

SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN SETTLEMENT PROCESS

SUMMARY: WHO NEGOTIATES FOR PALESTINIANS AND QUESTION OF SEPARATE PALESTINIAN STATE OR RETURN TO JORDAN MAY BECOME REAL ISSUES. US INTERESTS WOULD BE BEST SERVED BY HUSSEIN NEGOTIATING RETURN OF WEST BANK TO JORDAN. SEPARATE PALESTINIAN STATE WOULD NOT HAVE SAME FINAL AND DEFINITIVE CHARACTER AND WOULD LEAVE OPENINGS FOR CONTINUING INSTABILITY. WE SHOULD TRY TO PERUSADE ARAB GOVERNMENTS AND SOVIETS NOT TO ALLOW STALEMATE TO ARISE IN WHICH PALESTINIANS FIELD NEGOTIATING TEAM WHICH ISRAELIS REFUSED TO TREAT WITH. END SUMMARY

1. QUESTION OF WHO WILL NEGOTIATE FOR PALESTINIANS HAS BEEN RAISED BY SOVIET AND APPARENTLY EGYPTIAN ENDEAVOR TO INDUCE FEDAYEEN ORGANIZATIONS TO PLAY ACTIVE ROLE IN SETTLEMENT. SURPRISINGLY POSITIVE REACTION OF SOME FEDAYEEN ORGANIZATIONS LENDS MORE REALITY TO THIS POSSIBILITY THAN WE WOULD HAVE
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EXPECTED. QUESTION OF WHO NEGOTIATES, OF COURSE, IMMEDIATELY

RAISES ISSUE OF OUTCOME PALESTINIANS (AND OTHERS) SHOULD SEEK, MAJOR OPTIONS BEING RETURN OF WEST BANK TO JORDAN AND SEPARATE WEST BANK STATE.

2. I BELIEVE US INTERESTS WOULD BE BEST SERVED BY HUSSEIN NEGOTIATING SETTLEMENT WHICH PROVIDES FOR RETURN OF WEST BANK TO SOME FORM OF ASSOCIATION WITH JORDAN. I THINK HUSSEIN IS BEST CHOICE AS NEGOTIATOR BECAUSE HE IS LIKELY TO BE MORE MODERATE AND RESPONSIBLE AND BECAUSE POSSIBILITY OF SEPARATE WEST BANK STATE WOULD BE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO AUMSE AS AN ISSUE IF PALESTINIANS DID THEIR OWN NEGOTIATING.

3. MAJORITY OF WEST BANKERS WOULD PROBABLY PREFER SEPARATE PALESTINIAN STATE. NOTABLES, HOWEVER, WHO STILL ARE MOST INFLUENTIAL FIGURES IN AREA, WOULD FOR MOST PART PREFER ASSOCIATION WITH JORDAN. MAJORITY VIEW IS FAIRLY SIMPLISTIC ONE AND FEW HAVE THOUGHT THROUGH PROBLEMS AND DISADVANTAGES OF SEPARATE STATEHOOD. IN LAST ANAYSIS, WEST BANKERS WILL GO ALONG WITH WHATEVER IS DECIDED BY OTHERS WITHIN CERTAIN BROAD LIMITS.

4. PRINCIPAL PROBLEM FOR US IN SEPARATE ENTITY, EVEN LEAVING ASIDE ISRAELI ATTITUDE, IS THAT IT WOULD BE LESS LIKELY TO REPRESENT DEFINITIVE, FINAL AND STABLE SOLUTION. WEST BANK (WITH OR WITHOUT GAZA) IS CLEARLY LEFT-OVER RUMP OF PALESTINE AND IRREDENTISM MUCH MORE LIKELY TO OBSESS WEST BANK STATE THAN EXPANDED JORDANIAN STATE. THERE COULD ALSO REMAIN A LINGERING ENOSIS-LIKE MOVEMENT FOR RETURN TO JORDAN, PARTICULARLY IF PALESTINIANS GAIN MORE INFLUENCE THERE. AT SAME TIME, GREATER ISRAEL MOVEMENT NOT LIKELY TO BE TOTALLY DISCOURAGED IN THEIR HOPES FOR ANNEXATION AND COULD BE EXPECTED TO AGITITE FOR IT AT FIRST SIGN OF ANY ARAB IRREDENTISM IN WEST BANK. FROM US POINT OF VIEW, ANOTHER PROBLEM WOULD BE SOVIET SPONSORSHIP OF SEARATE PALESTINIAN STATE AND POSSIBILITY THAT, WITH RETURN OF FEDAYEEN LEADERSHIP TO TAKE OVER, SOVIETS WOULD RETAIN PARAMOUNT INFLUENCE.

5. QUESTIONS OF ECONOMIC VIABILITY, POPULATION ABSORPTION CAPACITY, ETC., ARE NOT MAJOR ISSUES, SINCE OUTSIDE CAPITAL AND ECONOMIC TIES TO JORDAN AND ISRAEL CAN SOLVE THEM.
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6. FEDAYEEN REPRESENT BIGGEST PROBL IN THIS. SITUATION COULD ARISE IN WHICH RUSSIAN-AND EGYPTIAN-BACKED PALESTINIAN DELEGATION WAS PUT FORWARD IN COMPETITION WITH US-BACKED HUSSEIN. ISRAELIS IN SENSE HAVE CONTROL SINCE THEY CAN REFUSE TO NEGOTIATE WITH PALESTINIANS, BUT IN SOME SITUATIONS RESULT COULD SIMPLY BE STALEMATE. TIME TO HEAD OFF THIS POSSIBILITY IS BEFORE IT COMES INTO FULL FLOWER. I BELEIVE WE SHOULD TAKE

LINE WITH RUSSIANS, EGYPTIANS, AND SAUDIS THAT SEPARATE
PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATING TEAM WILL PLAY INTO HANDS OF ISRAELIS TO
LA CCNVLY#FRUSTRATE WEST BANK AND PSTVRL PTO#SETTLEMENT.

AS ANWAR NUSEIBEH SUGGESTED (JERUSALEM 1247), I THINK WE SHOULD
ALSO URGE HUSSEIN TO TAKE INTO CAMP, IN CONTEXT OF SETTLEMENT
PROCESS, AS MUCH OF PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT AS HE CAN. FEDAYEEN
MAY WELL NOT RESPOND BUT FAIRLY GENEROUS OFFERS OF PALESTINIAN
AUTONOMY, INFLUENCE, BUDGET SHARE, ETC., IN ADDITION TO
NEGOTIATING ROLE, COULD ATTRACT SOME. THIS MIGHT NOT BE EASY
FOR KING, BUT IF INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT GAINS MOMENTUM,
HE COULD BE READ OUT OF ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM COMPLETELY.

7. WE NOTE, INCIDENTALLY, THAT ISRAELIS HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN
DOING THEIR OWN RESEARCH ON WEST BANK VIEWS. OUR ARAB CON-
TACTS TELL US MILITARY GOVERNMENT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN MAKING
ROUNDS ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT DESIRED POLITICAL FUTURE, ETC.
NEITHER ARABS NOR WE KNOW WHAT ISRAELIS HAVE IN MIND.
DAY

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED. WILL BE SERVICED ON REQUEST.

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